

Message Text

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SUBJ: ITALIAN VIEWS - EC ENERGY COUNCIL MEETING, MAY 30, 1978

REF: BRUSSELS 10698

1. DURING CONVERSATION JUNE 6 WITH FOREIGN
MINISTER ENERGY COORDINATOR RAMASSO VALACCA, ECMIN ASKED
FOR HIS VIEWS OF MAY 30 EC ENERGY COUNCIL MEETING. RAMASSO
VALACCA DESCRIBED ITALIAN POSITION AT MEETING AS "THOUGH"
(EVEN MORE SO, HE ASSERTED, THAN THAT OF AGRICULTURE MINISTER
MARCORA AT EC AGRICULTURE COUNCIL MEETINGS), AND HE NOTED
WITH SOME AMUSEMENT THAT THE ECONOMISTS HAD SINGLED
OUT UK FOR CRITICISM IN IMPEDING PROGRESS TOWARD COMMON
EC ENERGY POLICY WITHOUT - EVEN MENTIONING ITALY.

2. AT COUNCIL MEETING ITALY INSISTED, AS REPORTED REFTTEL,
IN OBTAINING QUID PRO QUO IN FORM OF APPROVAL OF PROGRAM ON
REFINERY CAPACITY IN RETURN FOR SUPPORT OF DANISH ENERGY
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PACKAGE. UNFORTUNATELY, RAMASSO VALACCA STATED, ONLY
ITALY AND FRANCE PRESSED FOR REFINERY CAPACITY
CONTROL, A MATTER OF GREAT CONCERN TO ITALY WHERE
REFINERIES ARE OPERATING AT 49 PERCENT CAPACITY COMPARED
TO EUROPEAN AVERAGE OF ABOUT 60 PERCENT. RAMASSO VALACCA SAID HER
UNDERSTOOD BRITISH POINT OF VIEW IN SEEKING TO EXPAND
REFINERY CAPACITY, AND ADDED THAT HE HAD TOLD BEEN

AS MUCH. HOWEVER, HE WAS SOMEWHAT CHARRINED THAT THERE WAS NO RECIPROCAL RECOGNITION OF ITALIAN INTERESTS. INDEED, RAMASSO VALACCA WAS QUITE CRITICAL OF WHAT HE TERMED OVER-EMPHASIS ON MONETARY RETURNS BY EACH INDIVIDUAL MEMBER COUNTRY FROM PARTICULAR POLICIES OR PROGRAMS AND LACK OR FOCUS ON OVERALL COMMUNITY POLICY OBJECTIVES. IN THAT CONNECTION, RAMASSO VALACCA WAS SHARPLY CRITICAL OF COAL SUBSIDY PROPOSAL, ASSERTING THAT ITALY STRONGLY OPPOSED PRINCIPALE OF SUBSIDIZING PRODUCTION OF ENERGY SOURCES WITHIN COMMUNITY. IF BRITAIN RECEIVED COAL SUBSIDY, HE SAID, IT COULD CONCEIVABLY REQUEST SUBSIDY SOME TIME IN FUTURE FOR NORTH SEA OIL.

3. ON SUBJECT OF HYROCARBON EXPLORATION, RAMASSO VALACCO MADE IT CLEAR THAT IF ANY SUCH PROJECTS WERE TO BE UNDERTAKEN BY THE COMMUNITY, ITALY WOULD WANT TO BE INCLUDED. AT THE SAME TIME, HE IMPLIED THAT HE WAS NOT CONVICTED OF LOGIC OF HAVING COMMUNITY UNDERTAKE SUCH ACTIVITY, QUOTING BENN'S REMARK TO THE EFFECT THAT SINCE DEEP OFFSHORE DRILLING WAS UNECONOMICAL FOR THE OIL COMPANIES, IT MADE LITTLE SENSE FOR EC AS WELL.HOLMES

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